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THE
NEW CEDERSKY
IN ART

HENRY R. POOR

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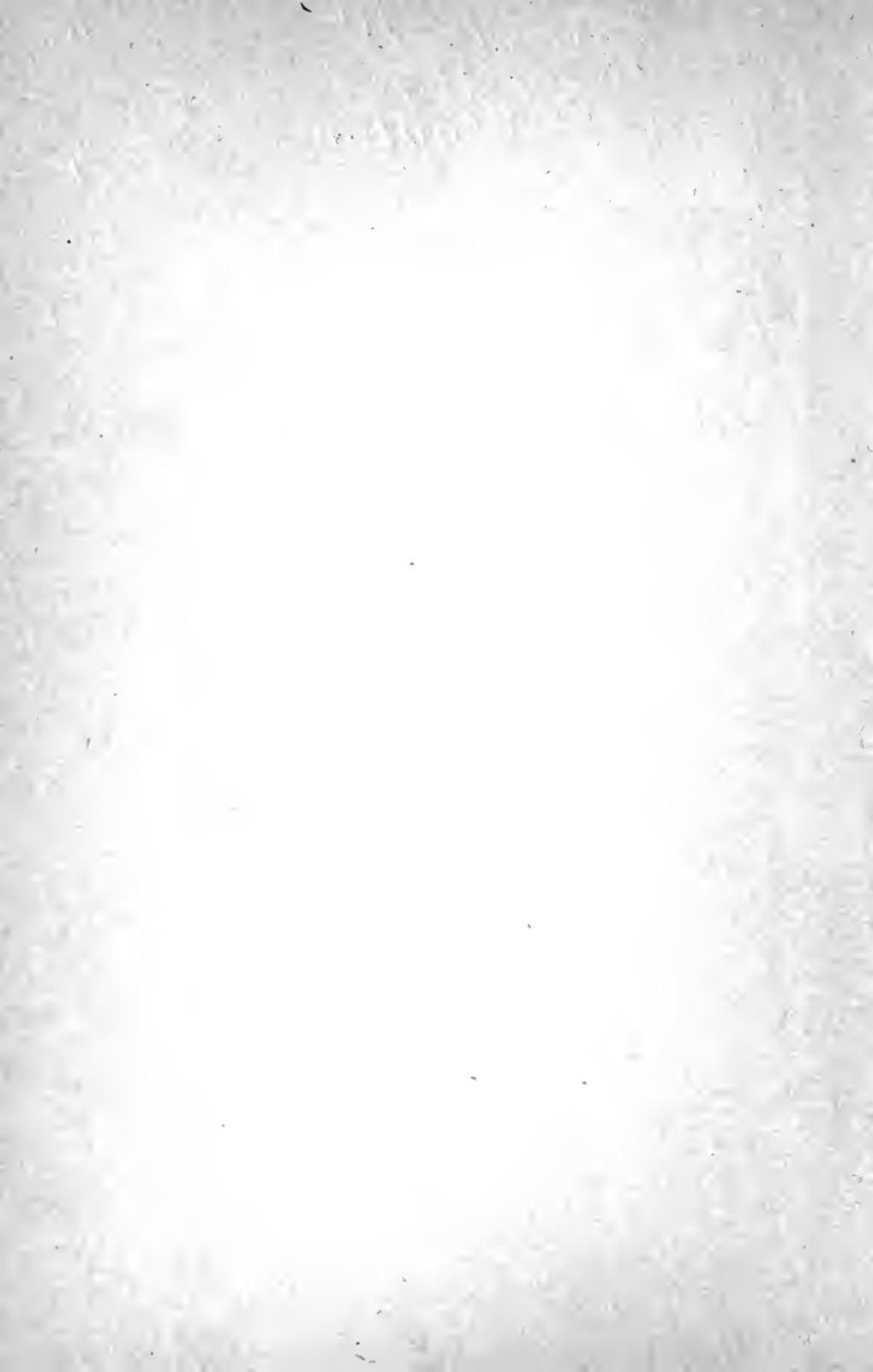
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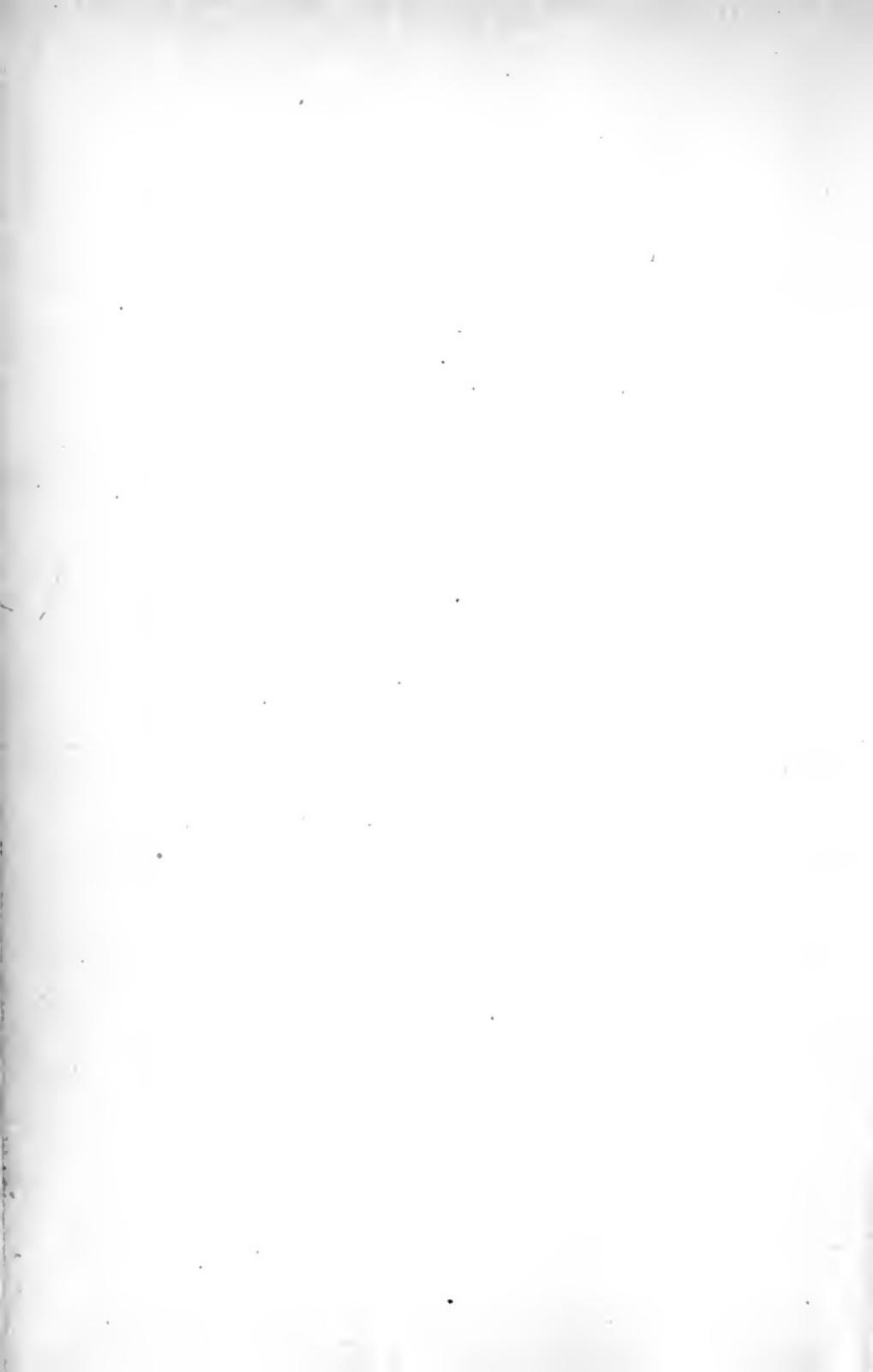


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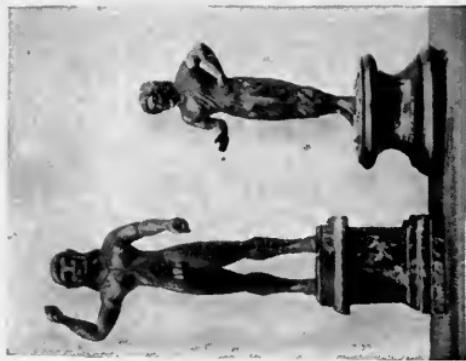
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THE NEW TENDENCY IN ART

POST IMPRESSIONISM, CUBISM,
FUTURISM

By

HENRY R. POORE, A. N. A.

*Author of "Pictorial Composition and
the Critical Judgment of Pictures"*



Illustrated

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INTRODUCTION

ART'S complaisancy has been shocked. The immunity which has been continued to her through thirty odd centuries is at length recalled. She finds herself now brought face to face with a challenge which she must either ignore or accept.

The world has lived through the like experience in its other great activities. In medicine Hahnemann inaugurated no less of a revolution, when, instead of opposing the principle in disease, he treated it in kind, nor was Luther's revolt any less appalling when he substituted faith in place of works. Music has arrived with less of a shock at Debussy because of Wagner, but the step from Mendelssohn to him is no greater than from Raphael to Gauguin. In jurisprudence the wig and gown has received its fillip in the Recall of Judicial Decisions. In time each of these, comfortably established by Tradition, has been asked to rouse itself, get up, and turn around. It has never hurt any of these to be viewed from the other side.

In the New Movement in art we can detect the same protesting spirit in which Luther nailed his theses upon the Church door of Wittenberg when he tried to raise formalism to the higher power of faith.

Here likewise is a protest that demands the eye of faith, with its ability to *see the spirit*.

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CHAPTER I

LATER TENDENCIES — POST IMPRESSIONISM — MATISSE AND PICASSO

“Evolution is not only a movement forward; in many cases we observe a marking time and still more often a deviation or turning back.” — *Henri Bergsen*.

THE later movement in art is coincident with the new philosophy, a philosophy of primitive-ology and intuitive creation. Though the philosophy of Bergsen¹ is an elaborate advocacy for intuitiveness and stimulates a confidence in and an approval of its use, it by no means discounts the logical process which it distinctly asserts the intuitions epitomize. The intuitions are right only through a right organization by which they are produced and therefore a product from them can only be good in such degree as the source is good. Like will produce like in every philosophy, and this universal law is proved by the empty echoes with which the halls of “Art” are now resounding.

“We must,” he declares, “break with scientific habits which are adapted to the fundamental requirements of thought. We must do violence to the mind, go counter to the natural bent of the intellect, but that is just the function of philosophy.

(‘*Henri Bergsen’s “Creative Evolution.”*’)

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"Evolution does not mark out a specific route; it takes directions rather than aiming at ends and remains inventive even in its adaptations."

It is this latest trend in thought which more than anything else has produced the point of view for the school of Matisse and Picasso; for literature now is forcing art's helm as it always has, from the time of Plato, who preceded Phidias, and of Dante, who preceded Angelo, and J. J. Rousseau, who preceded Manet, and Guy de Maupassant, who helped to close the epoch of genre.

The revolution of the Post Impressionists originates as a protest to the idea that imitation is the business of art; that technique is the goal where the effort of the artist must finally stop, that the result must be beautiful, that art's pleasure is *sensuous* rather than *intellectual*.

The movement is logical. After Bouguereau the deluge! To surpass the perfection of the school of Cabanel, Lefebvre, Meissonier, and Alma Tadema was technically impossible.

The fact is there was a great deal of Bouguereau in art's last generation, and when the days of a sweetened and perfected beauty were waning and the naturalism of Bastien Lepage and the imperious gesture of Impressionism led us out of doors, there was too much young lady with the parasol. She has been too willing. She has sat beneath her parasol for a full quarter century, allowing the light to fall on her at all angles and every degree of intensity in order that the painter might study *mere aspect*. Dur-

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ing this last period painters have learned and expressed more about sunlight than the world has ever known before; but it is almost time to let the young lady off.

Art has capacities that these technical enthusiasts are neglecting. Their neglect has been rudely pointed out by the seers and prophets of our modern day. They deride the notion that any man should enslave his perceptions and craftsmanship with the imitation of surfaces; and instead they place man's rational pleasure in art on a higher level. They perceive the striving of the student, intent on making his copy "look like," and with a stroke across his back straighten him to face the inquiry. Don't you know the difference between the real, and the *sensation* of the real! You are circumscribing your subject by what you know about it. Give the imagination scope without frontier, where it may range unrestricted in vaster areas. Whereas you have been tying weights to your ideas, free them; whereas you have been looking straight at nature, look below and beneath her, look above and around her. There are things you will find in these ranges that will surprise you!

This movement is directing attention to universal ideas in a broadened and lengthened perspective, tapping the sources of subconscious emotion, and denying such value for the *obvious* as was placed upon it by a former time. In this scheme of art the æsthetic sense, defrauded of sustenance in the object, is asked to find it in the stimulation of the imagination, em-

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phasized through the rhythmic and decorative enlivenment of the design. The art of Matisse and his school is a smart challenge to the existing order. Its tilt is not altogether at the beauty with which art has been busy, but with the academic notion that truth of "aspect" is of such vital importance.

In all fairness should we not be willing to pause and inquire whether, after all, the shock received from these expressions of ideas suddenly stripped of the conventional clothing, which a fashion of long tenure has prescribed, is not in part due to our equally conventional expectancy to find the fashion unchanged?

The frankness of the creed is enough to give it shelter, and with any open mind it should not be cast out because it looks like a serpent, but rather granted hearth room, with an opportunity to watch it. It may prove fangless and it may prove wise.

With Cézanne, Gauguin, and Van Gogh there can be no doubt of sincerity. Cézanne was a recluse who wanted to be let alone, content to probe into the essence of natural aspect and render its elemental qualities. The directness of his painting would appeal to any one, in whatever station of life or ignorance of art, *as a great simple honesty*. It was not subtle, it was not finished, it was merely the reflex of a genuine mind.

Nor can we give a less sympathetic hearing to the cry of Van Gogh, that anything toward which he was drawn provoked a "holy ecstasy" in him, nor deny belief in his assertion that the

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more ill (crazy) he was the better he painted. The mere feverish, cataclysmic technique of his work bears evidence sufficient of genuineness.

Gauguin, the man, was *sui generis*, a perfectly simple and natural anarchist who brushed aside convention in his search for fundamental things. So important to his art did he esteem the unfettered mind that he declared himself in revolt against all influences: "Everything I have learned from others has been a hindrance to me."

From these to Matisse is a long step.

Matisse announces that, "Expression lies not in the passion which breaks upon the face, or which shows itself in violent movement, but in the whole disposition of the picture.

"I condense the significance of the body by looking for the essential lines.

"That for which I dream is an art of equilibrium, of purity, of tranquillity, with no subject to disquiet or preoccupy; such as will be for every brain worker a sedative, something analagous to an armchair."

On the basis of these pronouncements he has won friends among the critics. Selecting from a number I present the opinions of four advocates of the new movement:

"We all agree that any form in which an artist can express himself is legitimate, and the more sensitive perceive that there are things worth expressing that could never have been expressed in traditional forms. We have ceased to ask, 'What does this picture represent?' and ask

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instead, ‘What does it make us feel?’ We expect a work of plastic art to have more in common with a piece of music than with a colored photograph.

“That such a revolutionary movement was needed is proved, I think, by the fact that every one of them has something to say which could not have been said in any other form. New wine abounded and the old bottles were found wanting. These artists are of the movement because, in choice of subject, they recognize no authority but the truth that is in them; in choice of form, none but the need of expressing it. That is Post Impressionism.

“How, then, does the Post Impressionist regard an object? He regards it as an end in itself, as a significant form related on terms of equality with other significant forms. Thus have all great artists regarded objects. Forms and the relation of forms have been, for them, not means of suggesting emotion but objects of emotion. It is this emotion they have expressed. They are intended neither to please, to flatter, nor to shock, but to express great emotions and to provoke them.”

CLIVE BELL.

“With these, ostentation of skill is likely to be even more fatal than downright incapacity.

“Now, these artists do not seek to give what can, after all, be but a pale reflex of actual appearance, but to arouse the conviction of a new and definite reality. They do not seek to imitate form, but to create form; not to imitate

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life, but to find an equivalent for life. By that I mean that they wish to make images which by the clearness of their logical structure, and by their closely knit unity of texture, shall appeal to our disinterested and contemplative imagination with something of the same vividness as the things of actual life appeal to our practical activities. In fact, they aim not at illusion but at reality.

“The logical extreme of such a method would undoubtedly be the attempt to give up all resemblance to natural form, and to create a purely abstract language of form — a visual music; and the later works of Picasso show this clearly enough. They may or may not be successful in their attempt. It is too early to be dogmatic on the point, which can only be decided when our sensibilities to such abstract form have been more practised than they are at present. But I would suggest that there is nothing ridiculous in the attempt to do this. Such a picture as Picasso’s “Head of a Man” would undoubtedly be ridiculous if, having set out to make a direct imitation of the actual model, he had been incapable of getting a better likeness.”

ROGER FRY.

“For twenty years past, or more, painters have been following the lead set by writers, not only in the novels and dramas of life, but also in philosophy, and have been trying to get back to something fundamental.

“On the one hand, they have tried to express what we feel of life instinctively; and, on the

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other, to express that feeling intellectually, in as abstract a manner as possible. In a word, pure feeling is what they aim to express; that is to say, feeling, unalloyed by association of ideas; the sort of feeling, in fact, that one may experience while listening to music; the sort of feeling that I have enjoyed, as many of my readers have, in the glorious experience of a walk among the mountains. The incidents, the personalities that make up the accidents of life have been left behind; the narrowness of time and space that hedges one around in the valley or the plain have been forgotten. . . .

"This being so, what can the artist do to create an illusion of the fact? How far can he substitute for actual experience in its purest form the suggestion and stimulation of its imagined equivalent? This, as I understand it, has been for some time and continues to be the reason and explanation of the modern movement.

"The movement is necessarily the antithesis of representation, considered as an end in itself, whether the representation be naturalistic, such as our eyesight immediately recognizes the truth of, or academic, namely, such as we would have the facts appear if we could make them over to conform to certain associated ideas we have acquired of what is perfect."

CHARLES H. CAFFIN.

Says C. Lewis Hind: "The solid aspect of things has been painted superbly. Our sensation of them, which is really a much commoner experience to all of us, is rarely touched. That



MEMNON — *Egyptian*



Lorenzo de' Medici
Michael Angelo



LATEST TENDENCY
Merodack-Jeanneau

RETROSPECTION

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is why pictures are not popular. They deal only with a fourth of life. When a man like Matisse audaciously flashes something of the unexplored three fourths on canvas it startles and angers us.

“Van Gogh broke a path into that three fourths of life which I repeat has never been explored in painting.

“We are now offered the beginning of an art that gives to a thing the part that endures. The work of these painters appeals to the imagination.”

In the two opinions, selected from scores in opposition to the movement, it will be noticed that no answer is made to the argument of the new cult. These writers assume that the burden of proof lies with the innovators.

“To go to an exhibition with a solicitude ‘about meaning and about life’ at the expense of matters of technique is not simply to beg the question; it is to give it away with both hands. In art, elements of ‘meaning’ and ‘life’ do not exist until the artist has mastered those technical processes by which he may or may not have the genius to call them into being. This is not an opinion. It is a statement of fact. To exclude technique from art is no more possible than it is to dispense in architecture with ponderable substances. If we lay stress upon the point it is because we have here the one chief source of danger. What the student of these strange ‘isms’ needs to be warned against is

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the specious argument that he cannot test them by any principles of criticism hitherto known to him, but must look at a picture as though it were something else, and admire it for qualities which he cannot see in it but must take on faith. There are numbers of nominally intelligent persons who seem really to believe that such an hypothesis is defensible. . . .

"In the process Matisse would appear to have relinquished all respect for technique, all feeling for his medium, to have been content to daub his canvas with linear and tonal coarseness. The bulbous, contorted bodies in his figure-pieces are in no wise expressive of any new and rationalized canon of form. They are false to nature, they are ugly as the halting efforts of the veriest amateur are ugly, and, in short, their negation of all that true art implies is significant of just the smug complacency to which we have alluded. Whether through laziness or through ignorance Matisse has come to the point where he feels that in painting an interior like his 'Panneau Rouge' or nudes like 'Les Capucines' or 'Le Luxe,' he is exercising the function of an artist, and, of course, there are crowds of half-baked individuals who are ready to tell him that he is right. As a matter of fact these things are not works of art; they are feeble impertinences." ROYAL CORTISSOZ.

Says Mr. Kenyon Cox, speaking upon the "Illusions of Progress":

"The race grows madder and madder. It is hardly two years since we first heard of Cubism,

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and already the Futurists are calling the Cubists reactionary. Even the gasping critics, pounding manfully in the rear, have thrown away all impedimenta of traditional standards in the desperate effort to keep up with what seems less a march than a stampede. Let us then clear our minds of the illusion that there is such a thing as progress in the fine arts. We may with a clear conscience judge each new work for what it appears in itself to be, asking of it that it be noble and beautiful and reasonable, not that it be novel and progressive. If it be a great art it will be novel enough, for there will be a great mind behind it, and no two great minds are alike. And if it be novel without being great, how shall we be the better off? Even should the detestable things produced now prove to be not the mere freaks of a diseased intellect they seem, but a necessary outgrowth of the conditions of the age and a true prophecy of the 'art of the future,' they are not necessarily the better for that. It is only that the future will be unlucky in its art."

"These amorphous conceits, we read, aim to 'pictorially represent' the 'cellular and nervous reactions which carry the messages of sense perception to the brain.' Right here let us see whether we are in the realm of sense or nonsense. 'Pictorial' means nothing else than presentation over again — hence representation — of visual experiences. It can mean no other experiences than visual ones, because vision is the only sense by which we can become

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cognizant of a design on canvas. Non-visual experiences are therefore impossible of representation, so that to talk of reproducing ‘shivers,’ ‘emotions,’ and ‘thrills’ is nonsense, and the same is true of the claim to represent ‘the cellular and nervous reactions which carry messages to the brain.’ Do not laugh — merely recall that obviously all expression is of some element of consciousness, and that ‘cellular reactions carrying messages’ are no more elements of consciousness than is the growth of one’s toe-nails — nor a bit more important to one’s neighbors.

“And it is further nonsense to talk of ‘carrying messages of sense perception to the brain,’ because ‘perception’ takes place only in the brain itself, and hence there is no such thing as a ‘message of sense perception.’ This whole farrago of jargon of scientific language empty of scientific knowledge is nonsense. These ‘sensations’ we hear about ‘reproducing’ are impossible of reproduction — even in the mind, still more on canvas — for when they are gone they are gone forever. What takes their place is not a sensation at all, but a memory, and a memory is not a sensation.”—*N. Y. Post.*

The presumption of soundness of premise and argument on the part of the Post Impressionists may be had in the announcement of Clive Bell when in his article upon the second exhibition at the Grafton Galleries, London, he declares, “The victory is already won.”

In the face of this, and of such a statement

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from another as that “the best thing for real art would be to burn all existing galleries of art,” it would seem worth while to hold up to the minutest inspection the claims of this new philosophy of art.

II

The first thing that may be noticed in the pronouncements of several of the advocates quoted, is that they have not come together on any fixed creed and that their platforms disagree in essential particulars.

While Clive Bell declares that the “new” artist regards his object as “an end in itself,” Mr. Fry makes it clear that it is not the thing itself which shall engage us but what *is suggested thereby* to “our contemplative vision,” and Mr. Hind reminds us that these painters are breaking a path toward the unexplored, their work appealing to the imagination.

Mr. Caffin most ably states the case when he inquires, “How far can the artist substitute for actual experience the suggestion of its imagined equivalent? The movement is necessarily the antithesis of representation considered as an end in itself.”

“We expect,” says Mr. Bell, “a work of plastic art to have more in common with a piece of music than a colored photograph.”

The principles governing plastic art and music are of course identical; the two arts are therefore germane. The colored photograph is only one of these arts in emphasis through an artless process; but the strict difference

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between these arts is that we hear one and see the other, and in consequence the technical processes are as wide as creating a perfume for smelling or a sweetmeat for tasting.

Says Mr. Davidson: "The extremists are always comparing their work with music. But the parallel is not true. Take the compositions of Debussy, for example; no matter how far they depart from their predecessors they are never incomprehensible, because their author keeps within the limitations of the science of music."

Herein is quite the crux of the whole matter; these people are attempting to touch one sense through the processes belonging distinctively to another. To ask us to hear the music of a statue or picture is no less absurd than to ask how the perfume of the lily tastes or what its odor looks like; or what a nocturne in F smells like. For one, architecture has seemed like "frozen music," to Corot his painting appealed as "my little music," but the charm of these golden metaphors may be spoiled by forcing the fact, and, having killed the poetry, we are left with only the dead goose.

"Every one of them," says Mr. Hind, "has something to say that could not be said in another form;" and here again we are obliged to challenge.

In reality everything for which expression is evoked by these means could be better said through the *form* of literature.

Post Impressionism is an attempt to make plastic art accomplish what by its nature it is

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less fitted to perform than poetry or music. Directly upon using a line as a symbol, a color or a form as symbols, the mind engages itself with *these*, it sees them in their dimensions and color; it sees them likewise as associated with other lines, dimensions, and colors in the same work; it begins its activity of comparison, it takes their measures, it apprehends their quantities, their qualities; the mind receives, inspects, and perchance enjoys them. All this, literature relieves one of. The *word* has no such quantitative encumbrance. It does not pass through long corridors handing out its passport to several sentries. It arrives at once, the "winged word" of the Greek poet; and Pegasus is its true symbol. The *words* arm, hand, leg, call up only a general notion of these objects, but when these are spoken by graphic art they become particular. The fundamentality of idea which they aim at, alas! becomes concrete, and their generalization, particularized.

Lessing's Essay on the Laocoön is still a vital document which Post Impressionism may do well to study. Their line thins and melts away at this point.

When the greatest of Greek poets was content to describe his heroine, Helen of Troy, by the simple declaration that when she appeared *old men* experienced the emotions of youth, he created a far more lovely woman than had he particularized, and a lovelier woman than any sculptor or painter could express, strive howsoever hard he may; but what, were Matisse to essay the task!

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What point in the scale of approach to the Homeric attainment would he be likely to touch? or can it be reasonably expected that this system, with its handicap both of omissions and commissions, can ever be expressive of physical beauty? And further, is it possible that the national mind of any people, even that of the progressive French nation, would be willing to accept such expression as this school offers for sculpture commemorative of its great ones? Can we imagine the statesman, the soldier, or philanthropist put into the eternal marble or bronze and erected on a public pedestal as a lasting inheritance for the Nation — executed in the manner of Post Impressionist formulas?

If art be “the manifestation of the eternal ideal,” the acceptance of the art here offered can take place only after the uprooting of all that is back of that ideal, a reconstruction of those processes of thought universally accepted for twenty-five centuries.

Again, both Mr. Bell and Mr. Fry agree that the object of this art is to express and provoke emotion, and that in this accomplishment “ostentation of skill is more fatal than downright incapacity.” Here again the advocate is assuming an unfair premise in his argument before the jury. The true artist is never ostentatious. With an emotion as his inspiration and goal, he resorts to no subterfuge, but, full panoplied, strives for the creation of a like emotion in “the other man,” which he assures, by every expedient, to be made what is wanted,

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rather than a haphazard sensation from a vague expression provoking the emotion — forsooth of pity for incapacity.

Meanwhile Mr. Caffin's enthusiasm has put him off his guard, and in rapt exultation over the freedom of the new art he takes a fling at the solicitude which an Academician has for "values."

Too true, they also are marked for the guillotine. What a carnival of anarchy! Now watch the *moplots* dance on the corpse of that which has outlived its usefulness. But what are values, and why are they at last thought valueless!

If for the painter *tone* is the polar star, *value* is the rudder. By these two means the artist steers his craft. The steering is proved to be wrong when he is betrayed by a false value. In music it is the one voice out of pitch with the chorus, it is the illogical note which ruins the solo. In poetry it is the weak rhyme or the lame spot in the metre. In architecture it is the element out of scale. In oratory it is the climax in the wrong place, or even the right word in the wrong place. In painting it is any error of tone upon a surface, and howsoever small it may be, it announces itself at once, the dead fly in the ointment. It may not be of importance in itself; the damage is not measured by its size or degree, but by the *area which it influences*.

We cannot believe that Mr. Caffin is willing to assume Samson's responsibility of pushing away this pillar and demolishing the temple.

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It is cited as an example of the power of this new intoxicant, which, like the loco-weed, will set the best-mannered horse in the world upon a series of mad plunges in his effort to free himself of all restraint. To rail at "values" and the quality which they insure is to discountenance painting from the time when, lifted out of the hands of the children who sought to revive it in the twelfth century, it took its place as an art reborn under the control of maturer minds, and up to the present, a period spanned by Botticelli and Sargent. The new species of art introduced by Matisse makes no use of the super qualities through which *each one* of the arts has attained development. The "quality" which is the gauge differentiating art from "some art" and "less art" is with him traced, now and then, in the happy grasp of an essential expression or characteristic, or, and quite as rarely, in an agreeable harmony of color, or design. The assay of Post Impressionism as an art would seem therefore to be very light, its dross outweighing its gold in overwhelming measure.

But this is not the final word nor the end of the argument any more than the present phase of Post Impressionism is its final expression. As every art grows out of its primitive condition, so may this. As an art it may be contemptible, as a philosophy it may be right. There is no need of harking back to childhood, of coddling the intuitions and slamming the door in the face of our intelligence to accomplish that for which this philosophy stands. It is a mistake to suppose that the end of "suggesting emotion" and



POTATO GATHERERS — *Van Gogh*



IDYLL — *Gauguin*

‘POST IMPRESSIONISM CONCERNED WITH RHYTHMIC LINE,
DESIGN AND PRIMITIVE EXPRESSION

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“finding an equivalent for life” is best attained by uncertainty of means. Simplicity of line may attain it, but not in the hands of the *ingénue*.

Ten years ago the writer made the prediction that the painting of the future would make much more out of the great capacity which *line* contains. The present tendency comes as a proof of that, but it starts too far back. When line becomes the contemplation of painters in its serious and scientific essence, a truly¹ new *art* may be evolved. In sculpture a striking example is had in bas-relief by Davidson. In the “Potato Gatherers,” herewith, by Van Gogh, there is also an expression of it.

III

Simplification through the synthesis, of which this movement is the culmination may be seen all the way up and down the pathway of art. When instead of making all the twigs on a winter branch, as per the Dusseldorf school, these were swept together as one may see in Corot, it was a step in the direction of Matisse. Here was one stroke of the brush suggesting a number of separate facts. Such a statement contains the soul of the branch in exactly the degree that the soul of the face is manifested by the newer cult and as may be seen no less in the technique of Millet. When Whistler made smudges on his Battersea Bridge and called

¹For an expansion of this see “Constructive Principles of Art,” by same author.

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them figures, to the disgust of Ruskin, or when Inness used the suggestion of a daub of paint for a cow or a countryman, to the confusion of the *bourgeois*, their procedure in art was exactly that of Matisse. The only artists who have kept away from the open door of suggestion are those whose natural love of detail promoted their creed for *absolute* truth: Ruysdael, David, Meissonier, Alma Tadema, etc.

But it is necessary to perceive two kinds of suggestion in graphic art; that which is partial and that which is complete; and again that which is highly synthetic, thoughtful, and even profound in its technique, and that which, in its failure at representation, frankly leaves the beholder to his own conclusions.

The *suggestion*, through thoughtfully selected parts, touches the highest reaches of art. Behold the pen drawings of Rembrandt, or his etchings in their first states, wherein a line may stand for several attributes of a thing; its length, contour, weight, etc. We take a vast delight in creating a sky out of the few eloquent lines from the needle of a great etcher, or wander with him afield over wide areas, occupying them at leisure where he has rapidly passed, staking his claims. This is that suggestion which the artist commands by his mastery of the whole subject and by his selection of specific means. No less may it be seen in the Corot branch or the face of the "Sower." In these, completeness is sedulously omitted with the same caution as with Stevenson when he approaches his *dénouement*.

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Not so with Matisse. With his art there is no space unfilled, there is no part undeveloped. Every part is accounted for and every part bespeaks design, (which really has nothing to do with the idea for which Post Impressionism stands). In place of the sensation of masterful capacity held in reserve through *unfinish*, rises the impression of apology for what has been inadequately performed. In place of an opportunity to complete the incomplete we are confronted with the job all done, and so badly, that we are provoked to do it all over again. And at this admission there are persons rising all over the hall of the "new" convention, exclaiming: "That is just what we want!" But the artist is a creator, the maker of a given thing which as a creation is complete. Instead, Matisse uses the means of outline and pigment for the creation *by the observer* of something at which he hints. We take no pleasure in the surfaces which he paints for they are without quality, nor in the semblance *per se* for these are monstrous. The pleasure to us is in finding something which lies beyond his guide post.

It is but a repetition of what the world has already lived through and rebelled against, a mistaken notion that the innocent cause of goodness is adorable. To the devout one kneeling before the image of the Virgin the newer thought has said: "Why magnify Mary — had you not better see Christ?" The collector of cocoons from which beauty has escaped may take a scientific pleasure in his collection

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but they give him no æsthetic thrill. To him the lover of art says: "These have an interest, but only in their possibilities. If you seek a fuller rapture, come look at my butterflies." To which the other retorts: "If you can't see a butterfly by looking at a cocoon you have no imagination."

Matisse and his imitators are busying themselves with speculative philosophy, assisted by the first principles of drawing and painting, and they touch art only as graphic assistants of an idea, *and not as creators of art*. Their work is the scaffold of the building and pointing to it they bid us enjoy the edifice.

To him yearning for an æsthetic thrill it should only be necessary to call Nelly from her blocks and say, "Make me a picture that I may dwell upon it and see visions," or appeal to the postman or the car conductor. In anything these may do in their innocence of mind will be found the pure soul out of which æsthetic joy may be evolved.

The artist will then be he who hands out his synopsis of a play, complete from the rise to the fall of the curtain, with the exits and entrances marked, and the general thread of dialogue indicated; or that serviceable man of the magazine who indicates what might be written and how illustrated, the poet who produces his unmetrical scheme and tells you to finish it in rhyme and metre. The soul is surely here but as to the rest of it, what matter; hand it over to the imagination.

Passing from the "innocence of eye" of true

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Impressionism we have at length reached the level of *the innocence of brain* which seems readily to soften to those numerous influences outheld by the imagination.

IV

Up to the present the real art in painting has rested with greatest force upon the *quality of tone*. The worth in the scales of the collector and the seller of pictures has been determined with greatest attention to that point. Consciously or unconsciously judgment of all ages past and that of the present upon all past ages of painting has found in this the pivot of value. Now tone, with slightly varied interpretation, means one thing to all men. It means color association in all parts of a picture, dominating colors of the picture distributed in lesser degrees of force throughout the work. In short, it is color unity, either of analogous or contrasted harmony, more easily appreciated in a Whistlerian "symphony" than in a full orchestration of color by Rubens, but, nevertheless, the point of effort to all painters and quite as important to Monet as to Dupré or Puvis. By universal agreement the sense of tone is the polar star of the painter. There have been periods when this was wrongly judged as to its importance and those periods have never failed of their snubbing. The draughtsmen, of the classic period of David, forgot it, the landscape painters of a time previous to this have had it

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secured to their works by time and varnish, which in consequence now possesses value as painting which is not entirely their own. The chief difference between Raphael and Titian, Delaroche and Delacroix lies just here. The general influence of Ruskin, directing the painter toward truth as all paramount, and with no thought of tone, is accountable for the arid period in English landscape following Turner and for our own Hudson River School. So insistent to the modern mind has the grasp of this commanding idea become, that even Gauguin, who thought to break all conventions, was still, true artist as he was, never dispossessed of this restraint. No more was Lautrec-Toulouse who aimed at the raw essence of things, but was nevertheless a painter; nor indeed any one howsoever stimulated he might be by what he conceived to be the *vital thing* in art. All these have remained painters, loving the surface and steadfast in the quality of it; Bellows, Van Gogh, Cézanne, Glackens, Mark Fisher, Dearth, Weir, Hassam, and the many others who in any degree have embraced the impressionistic formula come together, joining hands upon this line, arranging themselves along the cliff where Matisse has led, and look down to find him at the bottom where he has chosen to go in his escape from the past. His separation from all of these is complete. He frankly chooses not to be a painter. He has ignored the quality of painting. He prefers to be the child in spite of those conditions which strongly demand the mature mind.

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In Matisse therefore we have a man intent on presenting a fundamental, unadorned, undeveloped idea, as a babe in its cradle, asking us to reclaim, clothe, and in time find it companionable, through those *possibilities* which are bound to evolve into completeness.

One may admit reason in the idea, but demand proof of rationality in the means. His efforts, he declares, satisfy him, and also that he would not have different any picture he ever painted. In this he strikes a note of insincerity; for he admits some of his work was so turbulent that he could not bear it on his own wall. A second comes with his reply to the lady who exclaimed: "That self-portrait looks as if it might have been done by your little daughter." "My striving," retorted the painter, "is to see things just as she does."

The *seeing* with the pure and unsullied vision of childhood is a beautiful, and perhaps an interesting, mode, but does this purity of vision entail the *immaturity of its expression, which belongs to childhood?*

The *seeing* eye is *not* the intuitive eye; it is the eye of *experience*. The difference in the work of a student during the first season out of doors and the third is not one of eyes, but of plain utility in the employment of his vision. The universal law of development has been expressed by one of the wise men of antiquity: "When I became a man I put away childish things," and the effort to back away from man's estate and recoil from its obligations, seeking absolution for incompetency of expression beneath

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the shelter of the primitive vision of childhood is unmanly.

The assumption in defending the “movement” from this aspersion is that the windows of childhood open to the purest vistas, exposing the most adequate means for the expression of ideas and emotions, and altogether the most worthy to offer the vast majority of mankind to whom art appeals. Whether the child be one in years, or merely childish in his capacity for form expression, this condition is frankly preferred by the votaries of the new school to that condition of maturity enabling man to both conceive a subject with judgment and express it with adequacy.

Jacob Epstein might well be asked why his statue of Euphemia is more of a Euphemia by turning her toes out at an angle of 180 degrees, a feat which cannot be accomplished without falling, or why a woman with plump cheeks and a staunch neck should have wasted to a skeleton at her hips.

Why in the portrait of Père Tanguy, by Van Gogh, does an arm of one half man’s length aid our impression of the man, or the placement of the eye, purposely too high. Endless multiplication of such questions must of necessity follow the increasing flux of these enigmas.

If it is not necessary to express the character of a landscape, a human figure, its hands and feet, a silk hat or a tree, why does Matisse fall back on drawing sufficiently to make his self-portrait look like himself and not like some other man or no man! Why, in a word, if his own



A WOMAN — *Henri Matisse*

Post IMPRESSIONISM
PRIMITIVISM AND ELEMENTALISM



STAG HUNT, DECORATED SCREEN — *R. L. Chander*

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nose demands a determinate line for its expression, should he deny as expressive a line to any other man for his nose, or why for his foot or his hand. Why in the one case lean on Nature, accepting an intelligent line for her revealing, and in another case refuse the intelligent means for her revealing. If, in the one case, a given line was acknowledged to be right, why in an analogous case should it be regarded wrong by the use of a totally different line, a conclusion determined by the artist's assertion that whatever he had done he was satisfied with. At this point therefore we are approaching close to the area of *whims*: we indeed come near to childhood, and this frankly is the goal of ambition to the Matisse school.

Howsoever willing the mind and catholic the sentiments which one may turn toward this newest conception of art, the questionableness of its sincerity evoked by these and countless other like "eccentricities" causes us to place it for some time at least in the "house of detention."

In nine cases out of ten that which we recognize as giving an interest to this work *beyond the childlikeness* is the knowledge of art expressed therein, and which the child has not attained unto.

It is a case of the newcomer in sheep's clothing, we think we see the lamb, and he beneath the disguise wishes us to see just this — the lamb; but he nevertheless on occasions discloses more than lamblike intelligence. And so at first we are bewildered and then

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sense the deception. The whole is an attempt to bring together two poles which naturally separate toward opposite directions.

That this however has been accomplished with measurable success, some of the great designs of Matisse will attest, for in his effort to give out an idea through a design he has reduced that idea to its simplest expression.

Herein he strikes a chord divested of every extraneous embellishment. It is fundamental and therefore powerful; and the sound of it is lasting because uninterrupted. Additions might prove interesting, but to his mind are unnecessary. Look at his conception of the Dance; awkward, ponderous people disporting themselves with unfeigned abandonment. They move with no especial rhythm, but each animated with an individual sense of pleasure in the exercise. Each is emotional, each expressive of that energy which is stimulated by rhythmic music. There are no accessories, for accessories would not aid the truly fundamental notion of the dance.

Again in his group of three, with a tortoise, this group of three has been put together with a knowledge of the requirements for the best adjustment of that number. Herein the child is clearly outclassed, and knowledge by experience is substituted for childlike intuition. But the primitive sense is introduced in making the outline purposely faulty. The lines of the legs are wrong. The anatomy is uncertain in spots. The longing to accomplish, despite these disabilities however, conquers, and the

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group is placed before us in its crude organic lines in such a way as to make us feel the elementalism of the design revealing a primitive idea.

When applied to Decoration one must candidly admit that this archaism contains a charm; for decoration as an art of two dimensions has, in its simplicity, appealed to all primitive peoples, and their designs, if balanced and rhythmic, possess therein the desideratum.

Could one demand a more perfect mode of graphic portrayal for decorative purposes than that employed by Mr. Chanler in his sumptuously colored panels. See "The Stag Hunt," herewith.

But the question naturally arises, could not all the sensation produced by these pictures of Matisse be accomplished with correct though simplified drawing? Matisse declares he draws "emotionally and without the aid of the intelligence." Analyzed, this signifies that the co-ordination which should exist between his emotions and his means of expression is lacking: his emotion unaided by his intellect is inadequate. In short, he does not know how to draw automatically, intuitively. He has not perchance heard of a method of drawing organized in Philadelphia by C. G. Leland, and further expanded by J. L. Tadd, which develops the faculties of coördination between the brain and the hand. Pupils of this system are able to create marvels in design which are so wonderfully balanced as to give impression of mathematical measurement. In pictorial design the

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figures are conceived in good proportion, but without detail — men, children, running deer, horses, dogs, etc., are rendered with a swift elementalism which is truly marvellous. It is all a matter of automatic control which, when acquired, gives rein to emotional suggestion in an endless variety of forms.

A few years ago I witnessed a public performance of the most expert students from a class of two thousand from the common schools of Philadelphia. On the stage was one of the most accomplished virtuosos of painting in this country. After watching their swift magic of creation in design and pictorial composition, executed in huge size at arm's length, he turned quickly and asked: "Could you do that?"

"No."

"Nor I! I am going to get a blackboard and *learn how to draw.*"

Here then is Matisse wishing to draw emotionally and supposing that this means *clumsily*; a man having a large class of pupils whom he forces to draw academically only to have them forget it all and in time imitate his clumsiness.

What a pity he could not shorten his march around Robin Hood's barn by acquaintance with a system which forestalled his experiments by about twenty years. What a pity that he and others who are attempting emotional drawing by a method which should be dubbed second-childhood art should not know that the horse cannot be taught new tricks, in his maturity, by old rules; but, if at all, only by

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a logical method starting with that *faculty which has in charge the result.*

No one can successfully coördinate his brain and hand, intuitively, whose life's training has been to acquire knowledge *through his reason.* Yet we see attempts at this by a growing group of Frenchmen, now of the present fashion, some of whom are willing to place their signatures in the corners of these little trifles, and we also see collections of these drawings in all degrees of success and failure hung in some of our academies to the bewilderment of the students who are learning to draw rationally.

Augustus Johns, quite in sympathy with the new movement, declares, "Matisse has a big idea but cannot yet express it." Will not some one interested in these newer struggles direct attention to such illumination as may be found in "New Methods of Art Education," by J. Liberty Tadd; Orange Judd and Co., New York. Price \$3.00 net.

V

The Greek mind, the most keen and penetrating of any which has yet turned its insight toward art, believed that the complete physical and mental man at his best was barely adequate to the task of producing worthy art. Their notion of the inner spirit of things was as sagacious and demanding as that of the modern "man with a vision," but in proportion as their vision was clear did they regard imperative the necessity to give it a *man's expression.*

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The desire of the “new” artist to express the spirit of the subject through an innocence of brain, leaves out of account the fact that the *spirit* naturally prefers to take up its residence in a *completed* not to say a *well-made* temple.

It is no more unreasonable to expect this than to suppose the spirit of God will take up his abode in the heart of man which has been polluted. The Greeks did not expect the essence of wisdom could find expression in a Minerva on whom to look would only be to shudder. While declaring sincerity to be the essence of the new movement, the greatest part of this multiform effort is expressed in various inventions seeking some different mode than is natural to the direct, unaffected, normal estate of manhood.

Elsewhere it has been pointed out in the discussion on Body, Soul, and Spirit which assumes that art, expressive of man, shall represent him in his entirety, that its privilege is to proclaim his trinity.

Complete art recognizes an opportunity in body, in soul, and in spirit. That which has body only, contains scientific truth, the work of a student. Uniting soul with this it becomes individual, both in conception and technique. Advancing into the range of spiritual significance, it sacrifices neither of the preceding qualities, but merely expands from this broadened basis. •

Our rating of manhood decides that physique is but one third of the man, use of that physique

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for labor (physical performance), another third, and an expansion toward mental possibilities, the last division of the tripartite organism.

The latest comers in art discount the physique of art, enfeeble a manly use of that physique to the grade of childhood's capacity, and present the last third for a complete whole. What is the result of a like unsymmetrical development of man himself? Witness it in the high priest of present Pueblo Indians of America, the medicine man of the recent nomadic tribes, or the truly wonderful fakirs of India. Their communion with the spirit-world cannot be obtained through the robust integument of good health. The body must be sacrificed and reduced through vigils and starvation until the spirit can dominate. Thus forced it may find its affinity in the overworld.

But when we set forth to hunt up *a man* we do not pause for one of these specimens of the race.

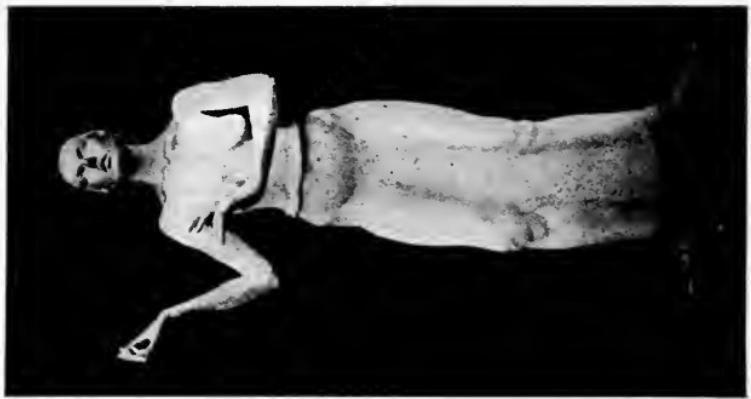
The balance of power in the empire of art is surely strengthened by this triple alliance. I therefore venture the following two reasons why that which appeals to the great majority of persons practically or sentimentally interested in art, as a storm now menacing its past and present glory, will in due course break and scatter with no other ill effects than the clouding of certain non-essentials in our present art, and with the much desired result of clearing the atmosphere grown dense in an obsession concerning the objective of art.

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In the first place the claim of "sincerity" which is declared to be the heart of the movement is not sincerity. The attention called to this point in their creed cleverly forestalls its denial in an attempt to guard its weakest spot, but it nevertheless must be assumed that any one who willingly adopts the rôle of childhood in both conception and expression is not sincere with himself. His attempted return to childhood involves an avowal of disbelief, not only in his own growth, but in the growth of the race, and in so grave a premise we must detect insincerity. The supposition that the *faith* of little children is a recommendation having to do with mental or physical *capacity* of children is a strange subversion of a palpable truth — namely, that faith has nothing in common with thought, and thought remains even to this present the lever of Archimedes.

Touching this general point M. De Zayas offers an important truth: "The impression caused by form, the conception of it, its interpretation, obeys in every race an inevitable law. The progressive evolution marks the anthropological estate of the races, the representation of form being more intense the more inferior the race is; for it is a principle recognized by psychology that the psychic intensity of the work is in an inverse ratio to the mental state of the individual who produced it, while the ¹artistic comprehension of the indi-

¹Incidentally this psychic phenomenon is applicable to the general argument of "The Conception of Art" in its emphasis upon "quality."



EUPHEMIA — *Jacob Epstein*



ELEMENTAL LINE — *Jo. Davidson*



THE SHADE — *Hansen-Jacobsen*

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vidual is in direct ratio to the degree of civilization.

"From this we conclude that those who imitate the work of children produce childish work but not the work of children."

In the case of Picasso whose philosophy is an ingenuous, generalized point of view, broad enough to accommodate all the world that prefers symbols to realities, one can but be annoyed by the evident care with which some parts of his symbolized scheme are executed, to a degree beyond any possible necessity of indicating a plane, which is the only important matter, and the free carelessness in which other planes quite as essential are executed. Study thoughtfully the work entitled "A Woman" and perhaps the palpable fumbling and juggling of these mysteries, weighed carefully in the mind, may excite the question: if Picasso were to do another "woman" would he put in all the different touches and smudges just as here presented, and which are so calculated to persuade us that each touch is weighted with thought? If so, and the symbols representing woman have been thus standardized in his system, then must we not have them always so, for since no individual is expressed, we take this to be the generic woman. In his sculpture, where he contends with form in the third dimension and seeks the essential planes, his results have a directness, a force, and in rare cases a beauty unmanifested in his work upon the flat. The suspicion therefore becomes just as sincere as the "sincerity" claimed

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by the newer cult that much of this evidence of thought and care, the tapping here of the charcoal, the firmer drawing there, the multiplication of edges and the attempt of exquisite shading is but a combination of digital flourishes executed over what is of the real importance, dust blown in the eyes as a last ceremony of mystery over what, to the mind of this particular painter at least no one need deny, has a meaning. It is no part of criticism to challenge what a man does, but there are two points in criticism which every work submits itself to: the first, is the effort sincere, the second, is the expression adequate for the intention.

Admitting that one can be truly sincere in this belief such a one would be found only once in a generation, and takes his place among the "great solitaries." How absurd it would have been to see a group of little people perched upon pillars surrounding Simon Stilites, or to suppose that their purpose could be anything more than to secure some of the echoed glory through imitation.

A second reason for believing that the new movement will never become general is the natural character of the public. The public (and art has always been dependent upon the public in its natural preferences, will in time fall back upon the legitimate æsthetic craving for the thing beautiful.

It may recognize the claims of the spirit, it may indeed take on a conviction that materialism is not reality, that the hidden things are the most worthy and that the suggestion

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is worth more than the visible and tangible mark, but the public has always been grossly material, at least sufficiently to demand the goods for the money. The idealism of Berkeley is not a popular philosophy, and to many an absent treatment is not effective and convincing. The public, in short, will have realities, the public will foster traditions, the public retains that same childlike intuitive sense, so lauded by the new movement, that will make it cling to what successive ages by agreement have pronounced both good and great. If art is to change it will never be by revolution of the summersault, but by reason of a sane tendency through evolution. The subversive thing may gain a place side by side with the art of the ages and will appeal to its own type of mind. The man who likes that sort of a thing will be happy in finding it just that sort of a thing which his sort of man will like; and again, there will doubtless be found those who, still satisfied by traditional art, may yet broadly open their hearts to results which are discovered in these attempts to speak through the spirit of art, and who are frankly able to see the good in varied approaches to the great source thereof.

Such a movement gaining momentum with a rapidity never before equalled and having as its allies both the newer music and the newer literature will by very force of numbers impel its invasion and command its territory.

The literature and music of this movement lags in no whit behind its painting and sculpture.

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The *Salon d' Automne* likewise throws its mantle over these.

VI

In Picasso and his principles it would seem the *ne plus ultra* had been reached, for in his case it is not with the matter but with the manner that he is completely engrossed. Herein therefore his contemplation is entirely that of an artist. It is the artist's labor to extract the essence from his subject and reveal what he finds it to be. Herein also lies the range of art opening to different individuals.

To one the subject is expressed through externals, to another through a suggestion of the subject's characteristics, to another through the spiritual element clearly controlling the physical, to Picasso through an abstract sensation which in his peculiar mental workshop is turned out through geometric figures, and to his mind these concatenation of cubes, triangles, and parallelograms are expressive of the essential characteristics of his subject. Whether a committee of alienists would report with a clean bill of health is not so much the question as to know whether his mind can find anywhere in the world its affinity, any who can honestly follow this lead and arrive at his conclusions. To all such, his work should be a pleasure, for almost every point in his creed is a perfectly logical one.

When we look into his *perspective*, however, we find it can have no place in any logical scheme. He justifies this act of representing the child as smaller than the adult, no matter



IMPRESSION — *Meeter de Zorn*



HEAD — *Fiebig*



LA CRÉOLE AU PERROQUETTE
Mérödack-Jeaneau



UNE TYPE — *Kalus*

VARIED EXAMPLES OF POST IMPRESSIONISM

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where placed in perspective, by the assertion that form has intrinsic but not relative value with regard to other forms. The child in the foreground is therefore always smaller than the parent one, two, or three hundred yards away. Very good, if you insist; but what shall be done in the case of objects of like size as to foreground and background? Why, if a visual art is to become the base for psychological expression should it fail us *in respect of vision*. One should not fall out with his terms, having *assumed* them, and this conflict with natural fact with respect to him who defies nature leaves such a one in the position of Canute, inside the surf line.

As to colour, the same assertion denies to it any existence. What is of much greater appeal to Picasso is vibration of light, which to his mind is more productive of sensation.

His art is therefore an appeal to the psychology by man by means of his own particular code of signs and symbols. Conceiving form as a matter of surfaces he creates these by a series of equivalents. *Aesthetics* being entirely dismissed and the address made wholly to the psychological faculty, one might properly ask why, with a code established and understood, it would not be as well to simplify still further, and have *x* represent a head and *y* a hand, and *m* the feet, *a*, *b*, and *c* respectively land, water, sky, etc. There being no relativity in art it would not matter how these signs were thrown together. To the knowing it could soon be understood whether the artist wished to call

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up an impression of a young lady taking a walk with her dog or a peasant returning home in his cart, a man and his wife sitting by the fire or lovers walking by the shore. This would frankly place us back in the era of sign language, which, if approved by the majority, would be a proof to the majority that progress out of that condition had been a mistake, and degeneration the path of true wisdom.

VII

The impressions made of New York by M. François Picabia to the order of the New York *Tribune* brings this theory to a focus and has enabled one to include its rating in the intense question: Does this art appeal *to me?*

The subjects decided upon were Skyscrapers, Peacock Alley, and Fifth Avenue at Thirty-fourth Street.

The results lacked even the remotest objective significance, and it is possible in a few years, when the New York experience is forgotten, the author of them may find himself in the case of Browning when confronted with some of his own lines. To know which is which may embarrass this exponent of Cubism.

But, it is explained by M. Picabia, that his result was a picture of his own mental mood, created upon approaching these subjects. Yet as one gazes upon the picture of the mental mood of this man, intelligible to himself alone and impossible to any other one in the world, he rightly demands, "of what concern is *his*

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mood to me, especially if he cannot communicate it!" "Art is the ability of man to *pass on* his emotion to another," and if Tolstoy had attempted no other proposition than this, its thorough proof by him entitles him to a place among the art philosophers.¹

The amusement which the baby obtains in making marks and mounds in the sand, which he tells us represent houses, roads, men, trees, and the like is of an interest to us commensurate with our interest in the child's imagination. If he continues to create these symbols and insist upon them at seven or eight we send him to the school for Feeble Minded Children. If in mature life he insists, the Asylum doors open.

Yet what injustice. These institutions include many well-educated individuals whose only wrong has been that they were symbolists. They make one thing and insist that it means another. Numbers of them can doubtless bring proof from Socrates through Plato that they are right in their point of view. The only reason for their detention is that, in their insistence upon these things, their relatives become bored — a wholly insufficient argument and one which for them must become a mockery, if perchance the drawings alluded to and published by the New York *Tribune* should come to their scrutiny.

Nay, truly, art is free, and should be, but why *exempt*? What of these others — aye what of them?

¹"The starting point of genius is original discovery: the second step is its interpretation to the world." —John C. Van Dyck.

CHAPTER II

FUTURISM — THE FINAL DEVELOPMENT

“They assume an epoch.” — *James Hunecker.*

To KEEP pace with the eager enthusiasm of developing artistic thought in these latter days is fraught with discouragement. No sooner have we made our plunge into the thought wave of one approaching sea than another is beheld. To add to the perplexities of the tossing and many centred turbulence, yet another is about to break upon us which in the course of events was destined for a latter day, but which in the anxiety and impatience of its discoverers has been pushed forward, and is now resounding upon the shore line of art’s farthest promontories. The name it bear suggests that when it has expanded upon the entire coast it will be here to stay. Indeed, one may find scattered upon the sands the forewords of its creed. We examine and find its pronouncements stated in a clear and strident tone.

One reads and queries:

THE FUTURISTES’ CREED

1. “*We contend that every form of imitation must be scorned, and that every form of originality must be glorified.*” At once we wish to have a

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definition for imitation. But proceeding we get the notion that this signifies reality.

Why then do the newcomers make the face of a woman like the face of a woman; why not like that of a child, or perhaps a man? This would certainly show scorn for imitation. How much better a caricature of a man than the Apollo Belvedere!

“Every form of originality must be glorified.” Art in the future is to be placed on the basis of the labor union; a reward, and what’s more a “glorified” one, for any kind of work.

2. *“That we must break away from the bondage of ‘harmony’ and ‘good taste,’ overlastic terms with which one could easily condemn any of Rembrandt’s, Goya’s, or Rodin’s works.”*

Rembrandt and Goya cannot reply, but Rodin might yet be asked if he thought his works required the defence here offered against *good taste* and *harmony* which it is implied they violate.

3. *“That art critics are useless, if not harmful.”*

Suppose they agreed with the Futuristes’ creed, how then would “3” read? Critics are “useless” when they fail to defend art, and usually “harmful” to the enemy thereof.

4. *“That we must make a clean sweep of all hackneyed subjects, and express henceforth the whirlwind life of our day, dominated by steel, egotism, feverish activity, and speed.”*

Why fall out with a subject? Originality is more surely proved by exploiting an old subject in a new way than by hunting up a virgin subject. We cannot demand a new Bible, but

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nevertheless long for original conceptions from the pulpit, based upon the old. Art has nothing to do with subject; art is expression. Art is universal; it knows neither nationality nor period, neither yesterday nor to-day. That art must "illustrate" a period and that period the present is to tie art up to the fashion magazine and the daily newspaper. Why, forsooth, the "whirlwind life" of to-day, why of steel, egotism, feverishness, or speed? These promoters of a new art creed must have submitted drawings to a yellow journal and had a heart to heart talk with the art editor. Art is a few sizes larger than this. It sometimes exploits "repose," for instance.

5. "*That we must prize highly the title of 'cranks,' that gag applied by Philistines to the lips of innovators.*"

Words of true policy if not wisdom. Nothing better to an assured success than the accompaniment of martyrdom for any new ism.

6. "*That complementary subjects and colors are as absolutely necessary in painting as blank verse is in poetry and polyphony in music.*"

No one objects.

7. "*That the universal dynamism must be rendered through canvases producing dynamic sensation.*"

Fine! Dynamic sensation is just what all art wants; but what is this brand of universal dynamism? Who makes it; who holds its patent?

8. "*That nature must be interpreted with a sincere and virgin mind.*"

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What, ho! The trouble up to date was supposed to be that nature had been so interpreted.

9. "*That motion and light destroy the concrete aspect of objects.*"

Neither proposition is true, but if believed to be by the Futuriste, the inevitable should take place. He should forthwith withdraw from art and try something easier.

The reverse of the shield reads thus:

"*We disapprove:*

1. "*Of the bituminous tint by which painters try to impart to modern canvas the patina of age."*"

No one tries to make a new picture look like an old one except the dealer in fakes and those he employs.

2. "*Of the superficial and primitive archaism which uses absolute colors and which in its imitation of the Egyptian's linear drawings reduces painting to a childish and ridiculous synthesis.*"

Besides its fling at Post Impressionism, this is an honest attempt perhaps at falling in with No. 8 of the "creed"; *seeing Nature with a sincere and virgin mind.*

3. "*Of the progressive pretence of the 'Sessionists' and 'Independents' who have intrenched themselves behind academic rules as platitudinous and conservative as those of the old academies.*"

The "Sessionists" and "Independents" have been going just a trifle longer than the latest development of originality — long enough to have learned that the pricks they kicked against were not broken by the contact but

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kept on remaining the foreguard to the chariot. Art, like everything else which is evolved, has laws of being — everything else save anarchy.

4. "*Of the nude in painting, as nauseating and cloying as adultery in fiction.*"

Too much of any good thing seems good for nothing. The bad taste in the mouth the day after proves the man a glutton, not that the meat, wine, and cigars were not good.

At long intervals it becomes possible in the average of chances for a small boy to push his face into a group of older boys and after calling them all fools and liars obtain immunity through the admirable nerve and bravado of the undertaking. It is in some such spirit as this that we loosen up the circle and let the new one in. He is at least amusing, he is intense, he is self-confident, but is too immature to know whether he believes in himself or not; yet we stretch a point and for the moment strive to believe with him that he does. There are several reasons why he should be humored, and the cat too, in her solicitous care for the mouse which she would keep alive, suggests still another.

Though his creed does not make good literature it is rather through the lack of education and general mental poise and literary endowment that it stands forth as a bundle of mental fallacies, or platitudes, than that the real intention of the spirit behind the creed is shallow. Indeed, the performance is in quite a different

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class. This at least awakens an interest not founded on humor, and we quickly resolve, on approaching some products of the creed of the Futurist that we would rather *see than read him.*

The arrival at this is in the course of most natural procedure, and on second thought no one need be surprised at the bombshell nor give more than ordinary credit for any originality in its device.

We have come to this simply because we are at the end of the road and there was no other turn. To the makers of new sensations, an occupation with which the stimulated brain of the Romance nations is ever amusing itself, the putting of two pictures onto one canvas was, all things considered, not a very original diversion. Photography has been exploiting it for some time, and were the American genius out for this sort of sensation it would have appealed long since to the keen Yankee mind. The fact is the Yankee does not yet feel that he has reached the end of his road, and, moreover, a large part of his sagacity lies in keeping this open. The fact that in literature, painting, music, and sculpture American and English art has been practically uninfluenced by "Primitivism" and "Savageopathy" is evidence that these nations are ascending instead of descending. Our ambition is beyond, *in this same direction* — we have not yet reached our perihelion but are persisting in our orbit, as yet dissatisfied with accomplishment of what is at hand and reaching toward the fuller illumina-

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tion of it, which we know must lie beyond. To us therefore neither Post Impressionism nor Futurism appeals as a necessity but rather as a point of view which we may indulge and even patronize in very much the spirit of the Romans of the Colosseum. Nor would it be either true or gracious to deny that the game gives us genuine pleasure, mingled it is true with the grip of tension, despair, and distrust, yet beheld by all of open mind as having somewhere at its base a reason which is sufficient for its creation.

II

To my own mind the Futuristes are decidedly more inspiring than the Post and Neo-Impressionists, and pictures by them would doubtless prove an endless source upon which to practise the fascinating ingenuities of the imagination.

Their attempt in brief is to present successive events as simultaneous. A street scene is not such as may be made with an instantaneous exposure in photography but rather by uncapping the lens at intervals to receive superimposed impressions. We may see the same character several times in the same picture: coming down the street, ascending the stairs, and entering the room.

The qualities arising out of *suggestion*, *intimation*, and *inference*, which are so subtly applied in literature, sculpture and painting, are in this art of the future substituted for actualities. These, besides interfering with the main pro-

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ject, fail to align themselves in the natural course of sequence and in the scheme of events are as likely to be taken upside down as right side up, hind side fore as in the rational course of events, and though it is possible to select from the mass of material dumped at our feet such as may be constructed into logical inferences, it must be remembered that there is but a certain proportion of the race that is able to entertain and comment upon two or more ideas presented at the same time.

Up to this point in history the boundaries of the fine arts have been as fixed as those of the United States or the coast line of England. If there ever had existed any doubt concerning the territory claimed by painting and literature, Lessing's "Laocoön" sought to establish them. In this exhaustive comparison between the capacities of poetry and painting it is proved that poetry deals with successive impressions, and painting with simultaneous impressions. This limitation of painting necessitates, therefore, such selection as will make the most of a limited opportunity. Painting must determine the "fertile moment," and must so order her resources that the greatest possible sensation may result from her material.

The Futuristes have now invaded the realm of successive impression thus far conceded to literature. And why, shall we not ask, may not this be done? If painting is able to strengthen the sensation for which her forms exist there is no understanding with literature forbidding her attempt. There is no proof of

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authority to Lessing, Winkelmann, or Goethe for fixing the capacity of graphic activity. Let Pragmatism here have its chance. That thing is good which proves itself, and there are certain subjects open to art wherein more of their character may be evoked by such means than by the simultaneous method; in all subjects of naturally chaotic character, such as battles, street scenes, interiors where the company is constantly moving, subjects of the dance, games, the action of horses, etc. In all such cases the new movement may be able to supply as true if not a truer sensation of reality than by our conventional means. To rightly cajole the visual sense, coaxing it from rebellion, is no easy task, but demands an ability to draw and to paint such as will put this art technically to the strictest test, and call for highly trained performances. Herein will come a blessed relief from the shallow prosecutions of crude color and cruder draughtsmanship of the imitators of Matisse.

The assertion, however, that this is to become the art of the future is on a par with declaring that in the future the only drink for mankind will be a certain brand of champagne, or other wine warranted to make men see double.

The liberal acceptance during the past decade of the many *isms* which art has proposed should be proof to all new cults that no one can dominate to the exclusion of the others, but that each must prove its right to live before the tribunal of a universal intelligence.

PANEL — *Tchouyco*



CUBISM.

WAR — *Hansen-Jacobsen*



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III

The artist has always held the mirror up to nature; the difference in the art of the world has been a difference in mirrors, nature serving each with her unchangeable pose. In Greek art she was reflected from the perfectly polished silver surface of the classic disc which was placed before her, and the response she made was flawless. We are absorbed by the creation and are not reminded of the creator, save in our afterthought. The *perfect* mirror never reminds us of itself.¹

But after the Greeks, other painters have also polished mirrors, though not as well, and so we have been conscious of the surface, and finding the surface have recalled the artificer. But therein we have discovered a double interest, we have thought of the man with the mirror, pounding out his surface, putting himself into its fibre and polishing it to his notion of fitness. We have at first perhaps been irritated by the unevennesses. When we looked for perfection we have found but analogies; what we thought was a counterfeit of reality was but a suggestion

¹We might marvel now, as no doubt our fathers did, at the inventor of the camera when first reviewing its results; but science we quickly take for granted as a record in the discovery of things which have always existed. We do not stop to-day to think of De Guerre and thank him for the kodak picture, or Lumiere when enjoying the color print of figure or landscape. Phidias and Scopas we honor because their names are attached to a few specific things; and Zeuxis and Apelles we hold in honor by a reputation for the *flawless reflection* known to us through the comments of their contemporaries. It is not likely that any of them painted any better than Mr. B., the still life painter, or M. Bouguereau, both of whom the world is now cruelly trying to forget.

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of it. Some mirrors were so rudely fashioned as to be no better than the reflection, refracted and broken, of troubled water, the facets so sharply bent as to act like prisms, flashing the rainbow colors. Again the mirror has been hammered out in large planes so that the image comes to us in cubes, parallelopipedons, triangles, bent, twisted and contorted. We scowl at such a one, dividing nature into elemental fragments. We think hard thoughts of him, willing to inflict us with his careless craftsmanship. We exclaim, "What childish effort at mirror making!" And when he declares he could make a better one but does not want to, we jeer the more and question his motives, his ability, and even his sanity.

Finally, we find the mirror has been etched upon, it bears suggestions here and there which we cannot but see while absorbed with the mirror's reflection. Instead of a singled thought, two, three or more are suggested. It seems as though the mirror had been quite defaced, but as we withdraw and go our way the impression we carry with us is the impression of reality.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION

"Life is short, art long, opportunity fleeting, experiment slippery, judgment difficult." — *Epictetus*.

JUDGMENT of art is difficult in that ratio which measures not alone our ignorance but our lack of sympathy and our lack of proportion. Were the subject in hand a science, the study of that science would in time render us expert, but no amount of knowledge of the fine arts ever made one a competent critic of art any more than a knowledge of the world's religions would enable one to apprehend the *essence* of religion. In both art and religion the discernment of the spirit is what counts; and the spirit must be spiritually discerned. It is for lack of this that we are constantly applying the wrong formulas. We use our own creed to measure the other man's.

The new dogma is supposedly vicious because it seems to upset our own. Both artists and critics rush to the rescue of what they think is right by fighting what they imagine is wrong; frequently without investigation and on the general premise that man is as capable of folly as of wisdom. To save tradition has been the first and last reason for the greatest conflicts of the ages.

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Tradition never needed saving: it somehow has a way of looking out for itself, and if it has not the seeds of perennial generation it had better die. The greatest fools of history are those who have not believed this; those who have assumed that the way of their present was right, and resented interference.

To-day Art is in the whirlpool; the tumult of the waters are about her. She has no sooner escaped the Charybdian suction than she is threatened by the more awful fate of the daughters of Crataësis. Many are the shouts of caution, awful the moments of suspense; but ye in charge of Art's true destiny spare the gag law at least. Again history stands ready to prove that this has always meant galvanic batteries and blood transfusion to the oppressed. The cause that is not proven by martyrdom lacks the best species of advertisement.

This the opposition is insisting to supply. Instead, a better policy would be to play out the tether cheerfully and grant all possible rope for the hanging. This would be both sportsmanlike — and sagacious.

The craft of art weathered the Impressionistic squall a generation ago, and the drenching she received only stiffened her sails so that to-day she rides better than ever.

Post Impressionism is but a relapse which when spent will doubtless give Art the regular "added lease of life," passing forth as she is bound to from the fever of the present. Through anxiety that the currents which now are dividing will not eventually merge, the presumption



FUNERAL OF THE ANARCHIST, GALLI — *Carra*



THE REVOLT — *Rossolo*

FUTURISM

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obtains that Art may be two things and not one, that the definition must be changed to accommodate a changed significance. Art frequently has been wrongly interpreted both at the hands of philosophers and artists, and set to performing feats which by her nature were impossible.

While being the cause for the total confusion of many a one, the newer creed of Post Impressionism need only be found to apply to Post Impressionism instead of to Art in general, and there will be no more reason for fighting her than for a Baptist to wage war upon a Methodist.

What says the creed of these two distinctive arts? In brief, one wishes to create a mental mood under the spell of which the mind may be stimulated to a new creating; the other offers the compass of that stimulation and assumes responsibility for its dimensions, which may be measured.

Is there anything incongruous in the same mind accepting these two separate kinds of stimulation! Because the barbaric color and crude forms of Matisse stir the somnolent primitive microbe which still lingers with some of us, must he therefore straightway cast out Alma Tadema or John Sargent who substitute the *visual* for the *mental* picture. Should a man be accused of treachery who would keep an example of each sort of art under one roof — duly provided with separate chambers?

If there be conflict, the cause is the old story, the story of "one way."

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Coventry Patmore longs for the formation of what he calls "Institutes of Art which would supersede and extinguish nearly all the desultory chatter which now passes for criticism, and which would go far to form a true and abiding popular taste."

This would be all very well, compiled, as he suggests, "from the writings of Aristotle, Goethe, Hegel, and others" who have crystallized in words the practice of artists. As these principles, however, have invariably followed Art's expressions rather than preceded it and are necessarily the discoverable essence of its life, it would fall out that a brand new sort of art would demand at least one or two new principles. Some of the old would stand, it is true, in any change, but nothing of the hard and fast sort can bind *art*, which is broadly an expression of that power in man which is regulative of the quality of all that he creates, his æsthetic and intellectual pleasure. What these pleasures may be in one age and another are controvertible; but Art's business is wholly to see to the *quality* of that which is created for this pleasure.

With this gauge we may not only estimate *Art* but the age as well. We may justly conclude that the art of the dark ages was sufficient to give pleasure to the beclouded intelligence of that age and with the same process of reasoning, without recourse to its philosophy or poetry, may get in touch with the keener civilization which prevailed in the Greece of Pericles. The intellectual calmness of Egypt, the spiritual

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contemplation of the Orient betokened that trend of intellectual reach, together with its limitations, the pleasure in which has been proclaimed in their art. As a man thinketh so is he; and so we may apprehend the intellectual joy of both the painters and beholders of the early religious art, regarding the altar pieces which, through a fervent realism, strove to express the spirituality of their ideal. With most of them the spirit was the directing force. No one can gaze on the early art of the Renaissance, from Giotto to Fra Angelico and Fra Bartolomeo and not be arrested and held in thrall by that sanctified intellectual approach which gave them birth.

This same criterion must absolutely apply to-day. Our civilization is many sizes larger than aforetime. It is inventive and furtively seeks new modes with incessant unrest. Art should be lenient, ready, and even anxious to put her arm about the shoulders of any new creed which can prove its case, and with the adoption remind it that the newcomer is but one of many of an endless chain and in no wise can take the place of any other.

“Before my tale of days is told,
O may I watch, on reverent knees,
The ‘Unknown Beauty’ once unfold
The magic of her mysteries!

.

“New arts, new raptures, new desires
Will stir the new-born souls of men;
New fingers smite new-fashioned lyres —
And O, may I be listening then.

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“ Shall I reject the green and rose
 Of opals with their shifting flame,
Because the classic diamond glows
 With lustre that is still the same?

“ Change is the pulse of life on earth;
 The artist dies, but Art lives on.
New rhapsodies are ripe for birth
 When every rhapsodist seems gone.

“ So to my day’s extremity,
 May I in patience infinite
Attend the beauty that must be
 And, though it slay me, welcome it.”

— *Edmond Gosse, closing his last book of poems.*

THE END



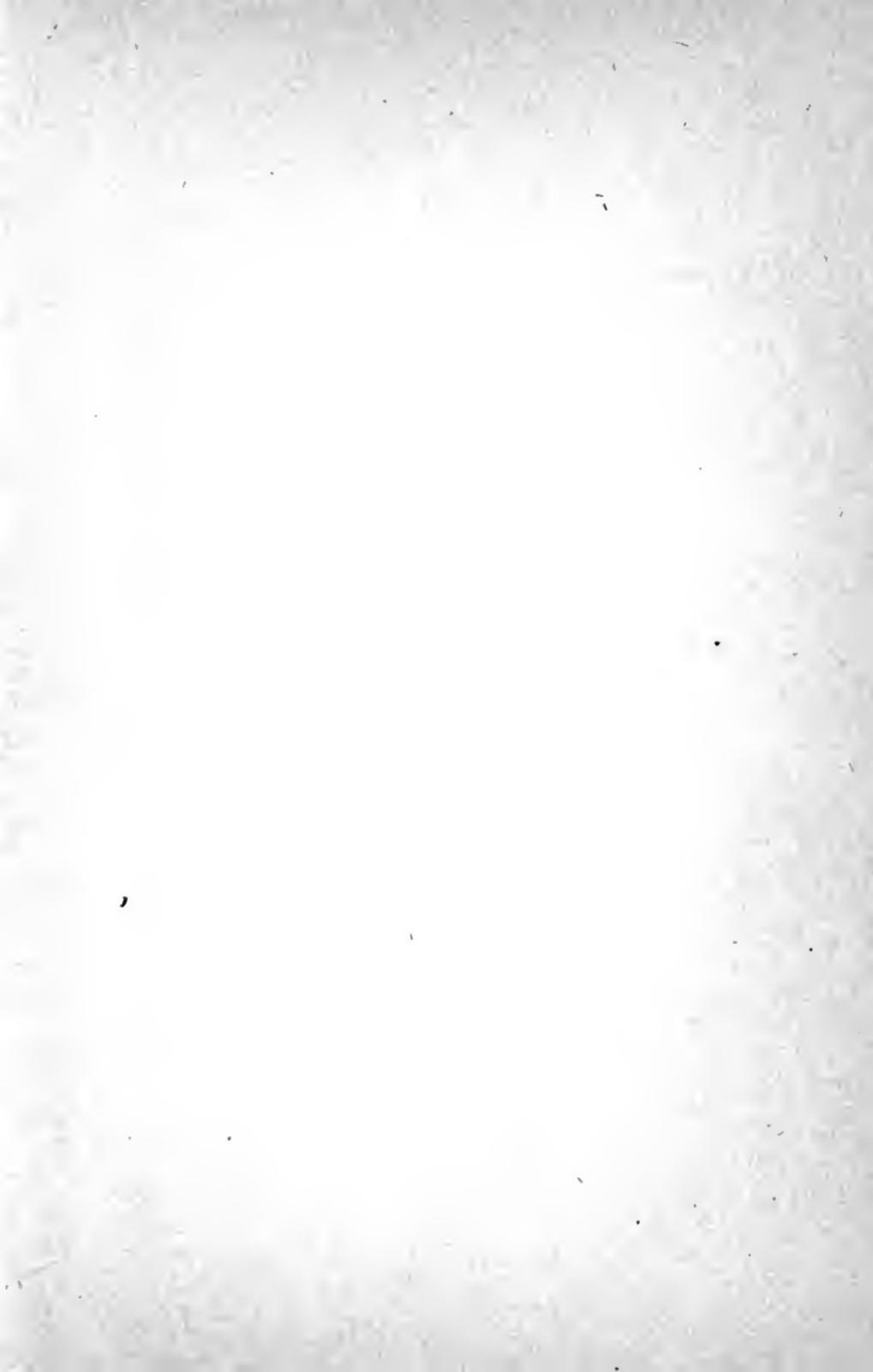
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